



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office
1387 S Vinnell Way, Suite 368
Boise, Idaho 83709



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Memorandum

To: Area Manager, Snake River Area Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho

From: *Acting* Supervisor, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Boise, Idaho *Wanda Bell Haas*

Subject: Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour Wildlife Management Area Resource Management Plan, Boise Project, Payette Division, Idaho – Concurrence
File #1009.0700 OALS #1-4-04-I-224

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is writing to provide concurrence with the Bureau of Reclamation's (Bureau) Biological Assessment (Assessment) for the Black Canyon Reservoir (Reservoir) and Montour Wildlife Management Area (Area) Resource Management Plan (Plan). The Bureau requested the Service's concurrence with its determination that the Plan may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), or gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and will not result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat for bull trout. The Bureau requested concurrence and made its determinations pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act).

The Bureau also determined that the proposed Plan would not jeopardize the continued existence of the then proposed plant slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*). On January 22, 2004, the Service announced the withdrawal of its proposal to list slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) under the Act. This species no longer has any status under the Act, and will not be addressed further in this memorandum.

The proposed Plan involves continued management and enhancement of natural and cultural resource values and recreational opportunities at the Reservoir and Area. A complete description of all actions that are proposed as part of the Plan can be found in the Assessment, section 2.2.2. In general, the proposed Plan continues the existing management of the Reservoir and Area, with some additional measures aimed at improving water quality, wildlife habitat, public safety, and maintaining or improving recreational opportunities.

Based on the information provided in the Assessment, the Service concurs with your determination that the proposed Plan may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect bald eagles. Bald eagles are known to use the Reservoir during the winter for foraging and other activities.

Currently, there are no known bald eagle nest sites at the Reservoir or Area. Because most activities specified in the Plan will occur in the summer months, and any potential impacts to wildlife or other natural resources are expected to remain the same or to be wholly beneficial, the Service does not anticipate that the implementation of the Plan will result in any adverse impacts to bald eagles.

The Bureau determined that the Plan may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Ute ladies'-tresses. To date, Ute ladies'-tresses has been found in Idaho only in Bonneville, Madison, Jefferson, and Fremont Counties. The Service does not expect that Ute ladies'-tresses would occur within the Area, and any potential impacts to the species from the implementation of the Plan are discountable. In addition, the Bureau has proposed to identify and avoid any potential Ute ladies'-tresses habitat that may be impacted by Plan implementation. For these reasons, the Service concurs with the Bureau's determination for Ute ladies'-tresses.

The Bureau also determined that the proposed Plan may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect bull trout. Bull trout are known to occur upstream of the Reservoir in upper Squaw Creek. However, given the distance between known populations and the Reservoir, numerous irrigation diversions along the mainstem Squaw Creek, and warm water conditions found in the Reservoir, the Service does not expect bull trout to occur in the Reservoir. The Plan is not expected to affect Squaw Creek. For these reasons, the Service considers the potential for adverse impacts to bull trout is discountable. Critical habitat for bull trout was proposed in Squaw Creek, but did not include the area of the Reservoir. Various actions in the Plan may impact the very lower reaches of Squaw Creek, but they are not expected to destroy or adversely modify the existing value of the habitat elements required to support bull trout in Squaw Creek.

It is possible that the gray wolf may occur in the project area. However, the Plan is not expected to adversely impact prey populations, or to significantly increase human use of the area. Therefore, the Service concurs that implementation of the Plan will not adversely impact the gray wolf, and will not jeopardize the continued existence of the experimental, non-essential population.

This concludes consultation for the proposed reservoir and wildlife management area Resource Management Plan under section 7 of the Act. If the project proposal addressed in this letter is modified or environmental conditions change, you should confirm that your determinations are still correct. If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact Kendra Womack of my staff at (208) 685-6955. Thank you for your continued interest in endangered species conservation.

Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA Resource Management Plan Legal Mandates

Reclamation is required to comply with a number of legal mandates in the preparation and implementation of RMPs. The following is a list of the environmental laws, executive orders, and policies that may have an affect on the Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA or Reclamation and IDFG actions in the implementation of the plan:

| Law, Executive Order, or Policy | Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 | Provides for freedom of Native Americans to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religion, including access to important sites. |
| Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979, as amended | Ensures the protection and preservation of archeological sites on Federal land. ARPA requires that Federal permits be obtained before cultural resource investigations begin on Federal land. It also requires that investigators consult with the appropriate Native American groups before conducting archeological studies on Native American origin sites. |
| Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 | Provides for the preservation of historical buildings, sites, and objects of national significance. |
| Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1974, as amended* | Provides for protection of water quality. |
| Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970 | Provides for protection of air quality. |
| Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended | Provides for protection of plants, fish, and wildlife that have a designation as threatened or endangered. |
| Executive Order 12898, February 11, 1994, Environmental Justice, as amended by Executive Order 12948, January 30, 1995. | Requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of its programs and policies on minority and lower income populations. |
| Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands | Directs all Federal agencies to avoid, if possible, adverse impacts to wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. |
| Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, May 24, 1996 | Provides for access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands used by Indian religious practitioners. |

| Law, Executive Order, or Policy | Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Government, November 6, 2000 (revokes EO 13084) | <p>The EO builds on previous administrative actions and is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications. • Strengthen government- to-government relations with Indian tribes; and • Reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes. |
| Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1958 | Requires consultation and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Indian Trust Assets Policy (July 1993) | Reclamation will carry out its activities in a manner which protects Indian Trust Assets and avoids adverse impacts when possible. |
| Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended | Provides protection for bird species that migrate across state lines. |
| Executive Order 13186, January 10, 2001. Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds | Requires Federal Agencies that may have a negative effect on migratory birds to develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to promote the conservation of migratory birds. |
| National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 | Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA specify that as part of the NEPA scoping process, the lead agency "... shall invite the participation of affected Federal, State, and local agencies, any affected Indian tribe, ... (1501.7[a]1." |
| National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended | Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of any actions or programs on historic properties. It also requires agencies to consult with Native American Tribes if a proposed Federal action may affect properties to which they attach religious and cultural significance. Section 110 requires agencies to identify and appropriately manage historic properties on lands under their jurisdiction. |
| Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 | Regulations for Tribal consultation in the event of discovery of Native American graves. Requires consultation with Tribes during Federal project planning if graves might be discovered. |

| Law, Executive Order, or Policy | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Presidential Memorandum: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, April 29, 1994 | Specifies a commitment to developing more effective day-to-day working relationships with sovereign Tribal governments. Each executive department and agency shall consult to the greatest extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, with Tribal governments prior to taking actions affecting Federally recognized Tribal governments. |
| Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities – Reclamation Policy (November 18, 1998) | Established a Pacific Northwest regional policy to assure that all administrative offices, facilities, services, and programs open to the public, utilized by Federal employees, and managed by Reclamation, a managing partner, or a concessionaire, are fully accessible for both employees and the public. |
| Reclamation Policy for Land Management & Concessions | Provides policy, directives, and standards Reclamation follows in managing Federal Project lands, facilities, and concessions. |
| Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 504 | Provides for access to Federal or Federally assisted facilities for the disabled. The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), whichever is the more stringent, are followed as compliance with Section 504. |
| Public Law 102-575, Title 28, as amended | Provides Reclamation with the authority to cost-share on recreation projects and fish and wildlife enhancement facilities with public non-Federal managing partners on Reclamation lands and authorization for preparing RMPs. |
| Interior Department Manual Part 512, Chapter 2 | Articulates the policies, responsibilities and procedures for consulting with tribes to identify and assess impacts to Indian trust resources. |
| Law Enforcement Authority at Bureau of Reclamation Facilities, November 12, 2001. | Amends the Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992 in order to provide for the security of dams, facilities, and resources under Reclamation jurisdiction. |

*A permit may need to be required for construction related activities.

FINAL PROBLEM STATEMENT

Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour Wildlife Management Area Resource Management Plan

Introduction

This Problem Statement is intended to portray all points of view regarding the issues, opportunities, and options identified by the public and involved agencies as relevant to the Black Canyon Reservoir & Montour Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Resource Management Plan (RMP) process.

The issues, opportunities, and options discussed are presented in the same order and use the same titles and numbers shown on the Summary of Issues, Opportunities, and Options that was developed from public input received: (1) at or as a result of the first RMP public meeting, (2) in response to the first RMP Newsbrief, and (3) at the first Ad Hoc Work Group (AHWG) meeting on June 5, 2002.

For each issue/opportunity/option discussed, the information provided reflects the AHWG/Planning Team discussions that occurred during the June 5 and August 8, 2002 meetings. In a limited number of cases, "Planning Team Notes" are also included to: (1) provide additional perspectives on issues based on Planning Team experience, (2) clarify discussions, or (3) indicate where Reclamation or other agency regulations or limitations will affect the range of possible responses. It should also be noted that, although it is Reclamation's practice to report all input received on issues and opportunities pertinent to its RMP efforts, this reporting does not necessarily infer endorsement of all comments received and outlined in this document.

Issue/opportunity/option discussions are organized according to the following major and sub-topics:

Natural and Cultural Resources (numbered N-1 through N-24)

- Wildlife and Vegetation
- Water and Soil Resources
- Cultural Resources/Tribal Concerns

Recreation (numbered R-1 through R-33)

- Increasing Demand vs. Carrying Capacity
- Economic Benefits
- Facility Expansions or Improvements
- New Facilities
- Reservoir Sedimentation
- Boat Ramps Along the Highway
- Special Events
- ORV Use
- Hunting & Shooting
- Potential for Interpretive Programs/Facilities
- Maintenance and Clean-Up Issues

Access and Other Land Uses (numbered A-1 through A-12)

- Roads and Parking
- Other Land Uses
- Boundary Definition and Relationship with Surrounding Uses

Management and Implementation (numbered M-1 through M-15)

- Security at Dam Facilities
- Public Information
- Law Enforcement
- Maintenance and Management Responsibilities
- Implementation Priorities and Funding

Natural and Cultural Resources

Wildlife and Vegetation

→ **N-1** Overall vegetation & wildlife protection & management:

Montour WRA: The RMP must recognize that the WRA was established with a priority on wildlife (primarily waterfowl and upland game birds) and vegetation values. Thus, decisions regarding management, recreation, and other use levels, types, and locations should be made in context of this priority.

Historically, management at the WRA has emphasized support for consumptive uses (primarily hunting game birds, both upland game birds and waterfowl). Although support for these uses should and will continue, this RMP is an opportunity for broadening management attention to be more inclusive of management for non-consumptive uses (e.g., bird watching and general wildlife observation) and non-game, native species. Such a broadened view can better optimize the diversity and sustainability of wildlife and vegetation resources in the area.

Pursuing this more broad-based approach will be a challenge, especially considering existing conflicts among various user groups (e.g., between hunters and general wildlife viewing interests—see R-29 through R-31). However, the fact that these conflicts exist is evidence that public interest and demand encompass both consumptive and non-consumptive aspects of wildlife. Management planning should therefore consider these diverse interests.

To achieve more comprehensive management, additional inventory information may be needed. For example, questions regarding the potential presence of sensitive amphibian and reptile species cannot be answered due to lack of adequate data. Where needed, the RMP should include an appropriate, prioritized program for closing the gaps in our understanding of the resources present in the area.

(Planning Team Note: As noted in the above paragraphs, while the Montour area provides the public with important recreational opportunities, the primary management focus for the area is on protecting and maintaining its habitat and wildlife values. With this in mind, and to make it consistent with other area's managed by Reclamation and IDFG, the area has been renamed as a Wildlife Management Area or WMA (as opposed to Wildlife Recreation Area or WRA). Therefore, this document, and all other reference to the area will from now on refer to this area as a WMA.)

Black Canyon Reservoir: Less management attention has been directed to the vegetation and wildlife resources on the lands surrounding the reservoir and dam facilities. The RMP should look at these resources and determine if increased management or protection is needed/warranted. Perhaps

an expansion of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) role to include the reservoir lands would be appropriate. In any case, decisions regarding recreation and other uses around the reservoir should incorporate both natural resource protection requirements and opportunities for resource enjoyment, interpretation, and/or education. One rather unique situation at the reservoir that should be reviewed is the future use and management of new wetland areas being created due to reservoir sedimentation. Most of these are low-lying mudflats and wetlands at this point, but the RMP should consider the evolution or succession of these areas over time, as the sedimentation process continues. It is suggested that these lands be specifically designated and managed as habitat rather than either designated for recreation or grazing use or simply relegated to ad hoc use.

- **N-2 Protected & other sensitive resources (e.g., wetlands):** Wetlands within the Montour WMA should be a primary focus of RMP attention. Protection of existing wetlands should be a priority, and development of additional open water/emergent wetlands for wildlife would be desirable. In conjunction with protection and enhancement of aquatic habitats, provision of osprey nesting platforms is also desirable.
- **N-3 through N-7 Potential for habitat improvement at Montour:**
 - **N-3 Noticeable decrease in pheasant populations at Montour in recent years:** The area has experienced a 75% reduction in pheasant populations. This is one reason IDFG stocks the area with pheasant (i.e., to meet hunting demand). No other notable decrease in bird populations, existing or past, was identified in AHWG discussion of this issue. This decline has occurred state-wide associated with loss of permanent cover.
 - **N-4 Reintroduce irrigation to support bird habitat:** IDFG suggests that this approach/option is not an appropriate use of limited funds and staffing. While irrigation could have some benefits, agency staff are needed for other, higher benefit, higher priority activities. In any case, if irrigation were introduced in some fashion, care would need to be taken on the timing and methods used; for example, irrigation in the spring can have detrimental effects, such as flooding of nests.
 - **N-5 Clearing of "old-growth" (dense vegetation): dense vegetation/weeds creates predator habitat, chokes ponds & water channels, and is detrimental to wildlife, especially birds:** Successful management for wildlife benefits requires maintenance/creation of a diversity of cover types. Dense, old-growth native vegetation is a necessary component in this diversity, providing permanent residual nesting cover for upland game birds. Pastures also can play a role, but wholesale clearing of old-growth vegetation is not appropriate. Also, a distinction must be made between vegetation management for wildlife benefits and the need to control noxious weeds. In order for old-growth, residual cover to provide optimum wildlife benefits, it should be relatively weed-free. Given this fact, conflicts can develop between the desire to protect permanent cover habitat and the need to control noxious weeds. In areas where noxious weeds are a problem, it may be necessary to place first priority on clearing/eliminating the weeds, with restoration of native species a follow-on effort (see N-15 for further discussion on weed control issues and challenges). The RMP and associated vegetation and wildlife management programs must create a balance between provision of habitat diversity and control of undesirable species. This is not an easy balance to create.
 - **N-6 Restore habitat for geese:** The Montour area is one of the densest goose nesting areas in the lower 48 states, and IDFG already maintains nesting platforms and conducts other activities to promote nesting productivity. Goose habitat management will remain one of IDFG's priorities into the future.

It is relevant to note that IDFG also devotes management attention to providing habitat for other waterfowl, such as wood ducks (e.g., wood duck boxes are provided and maintained). In fact, just as much effort is directed to providing and maintaining habitat for other waterfowl species as for geese. This balanced approach is planned to continue.

- **N-7 Desirability of closing Montour area for 4-5 years to promote restoration:** AHWG discussion of this question focused on populations of upland game birds, particularly pheasant. Given this focus, such a closure is not necessary due to IDFG's stocking program. This program essentially fills the carrying capacity of the area for upland game birds; a closure would not really improve populations. Also according to IDFG (and general understanding of wildlife management), limiting hunting does not generally improve pheasant populations.
- **N-8 Beaver management at Montour:** There is a large beaver population at and around the Montour WMA. Beaver do inhibit water control at constructed wetlands and the surface drainage system. The RMP should consider whether the level and extent of beaver impacts warrant management of the population. If so, appropriate actions should be reviewed and included.
- **N-9 Impacts of recreation & other uses (reservoir & Montour):** Recreation impacts on vegetation and wildlife resources are a concern at Montour. To date, such impacts have not been a recognized problem around the reservoir.

At Montour, the extent and severity of use impacts are highly variable, dependent upon type of access/use, location, and time of year. Observations made by AHWG members include:

- Uncontrolled vehicular access, including ORVs, generally causes the most severe, long-term damage to habitat.
 - Intrusion into nesting areas during the nesting season is one of the most significant concerns, whether due to activities of human users or inadequate control of domestic animals.
 - IDFG specifically closes key nesting areas to all recreational use each year during nesting season. The closures are identified via signage and through coordination with user groups. However, enforcement of the closures is difficult and violations are a major problem. Better enforcement and increased public education are both needed.
 - Specific to domestic animals, the dog trials that occur at Montour are a permitted use. IDFG has guidelines for proper dog handling in sensitive habitat areas and works with organized groups to manage where the trials are conducted during sensitive times of year. It is the casual users (e.g., individuals walking their dogs and allowing them off-leash or individuals conducting dog training) who present the bigger management challenge.
 - Overall, the RMP should recognize that the WMA was established with a priority on protecting wildlife and vegetation values. Non-wildlife-oriented recreation uses should remain subordinate to this priority.
- **N-10 Need for more detailed wildlife action plan (both reservoir area and Montour):** An updated management plan for Montour is currently being prepared by IDFG; this planning effort will need to be integrated with the overall RMP.
 - **N-11 through N-13—IDFG Role:** **N-11 Define IDFG activities at present (bird stocking, vegetation management, etc.);** **N-12 Plan for the future--meet needs;** and **N-13 Expand to include the reservoir lands;** The RMP process will include a review of IDFG's current role and activities in the study area, including the guiding agreement between Reclamation and IDFG for management of the

Montour WMA. Based on this review and in context with the public input discussed herein and the resource evaluations that are part of the RMP program, desirable changes or enhancements can be made in either (or both) of the following: (1) IDFG's management program for Montour (see N-10); and/or (2) the geographic extent of IDFG's management attention (i.e., to include all or part of the lands surrounding the reservoir). In the latter regard, IDFG has looked at the habitat enhancement potential of some of Reclamation's lands south of the river, in the central part of the study area, and west of Montour (known as the Hailey Place); however, no action has been proposed to date. Beyond this, IDFG has not been requested to perform nor has independently initiated management studies for lands around the reservoir or the dam. The RMP is an opportunity to reconsider, and perhaps act on, this potential.

- **N-14 Fish habitat improvement potential:** AHWG discussion of this question revealed that fish habitat management or improvement is not needed at Montour and that active management of fish habitat in the reservoir has not been a priority for IDFG.

(Planning Team Note: We do not want to encourage fishing in the wetland ponds at Montour. Fishing in these ponds during the waterfowl nesting season conflicts with waterfowl reproduction. Also, further discussions should be conducted with IDFG on the potential for fish habitat in the reservoir. If the reservoir environment is not conducive to improving habitat, funding should probably not be directed to this program.)

- **N-15 through N-16 Integrated Pest Management:**

- **N-15 Weed control is important, but progress has been slow (Montour):** Noxious weed control is a recognized, major issue at Montour. From the standpoint of public perception, inadequate action has been taken to address the problem on Reclamation lands. However, IDFG indicates that more is being done (or is planned) this year (2002) than has happened in the last 20 years. For example, Gem County conducted an eradication (spraying) program throughout July of this year; IDFG is beginning to experiment with biological control methods; involved agencies are beginning to enlist the assistance of volunteer groups where appropriate (e.g., the Boy Scouts, Audubon Society, etc.); and, Reclamation funding for weed control has been increased from \$7,000 to \$14,000 annually.

It is recognized that a continuing action plan for weed control is needed. Future efforts should be in the form of an Integrated Pest Management Plan, that evaluates several integrated methods of weed control, rather than treatment with herbicides only or other ad hoc methods, and that includes re-planting/restoration with native species as part of the solution. Introduction and transport of noxious weed seed occurs via the river, vehicles, people, domestic animals, etc. Each of these sources must be recognized and considered. Further, spraying/chemical use should be kept to a minimum, and selection of any chemicals used should be based in part on site-specific soil characteristics.

(Planning Team Note: From Reclamation's standpoint, the issue of controlling noxious weeds should take a high priority in the RMP. This also includes planting of native vegetation where weeds are being eradicated.)

- **N-16 Buckwheat as a source of weed seed:** This is not an accurate or meaningful statement; perhaps it is a typographical or interpretive error. In any case, it should be eliminated from further consideration.

- **N-17 Introduced vegetation/landscaping (proper management):** The only observation made under this issue is that poison ivy, while being a native species to the area, is a hazard in the Cobblestone Park area; public education and signage is needed to alert the public to this condition.

Water and Soil Resources

- **N-18 Erosion along reservoir shore:** The RMP process should assess whether shoreline erosion is a significant concern at Black Canyon Reservoir, and whether control measures are necessary or feasible. This assessment should be made in context with the total maximum daily load (TMDL) established by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the Payette River below the dam.

- **N-19 Impacts on groundwater at Montour:**

(Planning Team Note: No additional insight into the basis for this concern emerged through AHWG discussion; the potential for impacts to groundwater will be assessed relative to any proposed RMP action.)

- **N-20 Surface water system at Montour (operation, ownership, management, flooding issues):** Ditch maintenance is an issue, particularly due to beaver activity. IDFG currently dedicates funds for ditch maintenance (through a private ditch company). However, more may be needed in order to achieve wetland restoration/creation and other habitat management objectives. The RMP process should review the need for this maintenance and confirm responsibility for carrying out required actions.

From another perspective, the desirability of establishing adequate access to surface and/or groundwater for fire protection in the Montour WMA was noted during AHWG discussion. Specifically, Fire District 2 Fire Department would like to see one or more dry hydrants installed to pump out of the ditches for fire fighting efforts.

Cultural Resources/Tribal Concerns

- **N-21 Impacts of use on cultural resources—especially Montour:** Archaeological inventories have been conducted in the Montour area since the mid-1970s. Reclamation actively supervises ground-disturbing activities that could impact cultural resources. The RMP will include provisions for continuing to protect cultural resources and for mitigating impacts to these resources.
- **N-22 Montour old town site:** Very little remains of the old Montour town site. Nevertheless, perhaps the town site (and especially the remains of the Mitchell, Marsh, and Ireton Ranch), in view of its interesting past, would offer some interpretative value (e.g., an information kiosk).
- **N-23 Future status of Palmer House & other structures:** Reclamation owns the lands and structures at this site. Alternatives will be considered for either managing or removing the buildings when the daughter of the original owner is no longer living in the house. One suggestion is that the house be used as a historical center/museum. However, such use would require an unknown amount of restoration to bring the structure up to current building code standards. Health and safety issues as well as long-term maintenance concerns and funding will need to be addressed. The State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted prior to any actions due to the historic qualities of the site.
- **N-24 Potential for Tribal cultural center:** Montour may be an appropriate site for a Tribal cultural center. However, the question arises whether this would be an appropriate use in an area established to emphasize/prioritize wildlife (see N-9).

Recreation

Increasing Demand vs. Carrying Capacity

→ **R-1 Reservoir lands and waters—demand vs. capacity:** Important perspectives related to this concern include:

- One of the most fundamental and significant issues is the impact of continuing reservoir sedimentation on carrying capacity for water-oriented uses, particularly boating and fishing. Large areas in the upper reaches of the reservoir are becoming too shallow for propeller-driven boats. While many of these areas are still usable by personal watercraft and jet boat users, other boaters are being forced into an ever-smaller reservoir surface area. The decreasing reservoir surface area and volume is also progressively eliminating fish habitat.

(Planning Team Note: One suggestion for the Triangle Park area has been to dredge some of the sediments and use them to create a beach. Because the purpose of the dredging would be to improve recreation, Reclamation does not have authority to pursue this option. A non-Federal public entity as a managing partner for the area would be required before any recreation development could occur, along with a non-Federal 50 % cost-share. Very preliminary cost estimates to dredge a 200-foot wide, 10-foot deep, 2-mile long area would likely be somewhere between \$20 to \$24 million. Additionally, it would be anticipated that periodic dredging maintenance would be needed to continue to remove sediments.)

- Demand for boating and other watercraft use is increasing. Especially taken in context with the effects of sedimentation, this is raising concern for the carrying capacity of the reservoir surface. If demand continues to increase, it may become necessary to control the numbers or types of boats and/or watercraft on the water at any given time. Possible responses to this issue include: limiting the horsepower of craft allowed on the reservoir; instituting a variable fee structure that charges more to launch during peak times; delineating zones on the reservoir for different types of boats/uses; or directly placing limits on the numbers of craft allowed on the reservoir at a given time. It is recognized that none of these measures is desirable, and each would be difficult to institute and enforce. However, safety and quality of experience may dictate that such actions be taken in the future.
- Additional park capacity (offering the types of facilities, opportunities, and environment of Black Canyon Park) should be provided, if feasible, to meet increasing demand. Currently, Black Canyon Park is the only major location providing the combination of a park environment on the reservoir shore, swimming, and boating access to reservoir waters. Triangle Park is small, does not offer the range of facilities available at Black Canyon Park, and is located in an area where reservoir sedimentation is beginning to limit the types of boats that can operate. Wild Rose and Cobblestone Parks do not provide reservoir access. As a result, Black Canyon Park receives the most intensive use and is most subject to crowding and over-use. During peak periods, the parking lots fill by mid-day and either: (1) visitors begin parking along the highway and walking into the park; or (2) boaters are forced to launch from, and end up parking near, one of the ramps along the highway. These conditions raise highway safety concerns (see A-2/A-3) as well as simply illustrating capacity problems. The RMP should seek feasible opportunities to increase the capacity of Black Canyon Park or add comparable opportunities elsewhere.

(Planning Team Note: The demand vs. capacity problem at Black Canyon Park is unquestionable. However, efforts to expand opportunities at or comparable to this park will need to consider potential constraints represented by reservoir surface carrying capacity. Currently,

boating use of the reservoir is also high during peak periods, necessitating regulation of boat travel direction and speed. At some point, providing additional capacity for the boating public to gain access to the reservoir could result in unacceptable crowding conditions on the reservoir itself. Also, Reclamation has no authority for recreation development beyond minimum basic facilities at this time as there is no non-Federal public entity serving as a managing partner which is required in order for Reclamation to share development costs.)

- Both the seasons and times of day when Black Canyon Park is open should be reviewed. Currently, the park is closed during the spring and fall; this limits use and may increase demand at other parks and facilities. Also, during the season the park is open, some users suggest that it is not open early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening to properly meet demand (e.g., early morning or evening boaters are forced to use the ramps along the highway because the park facility is closed; this contributes to the problems associated with these roadside ramps (see A-2/A-3).

(Planning Team Note: Reclamation can review hours of operation of the parks but must also consider that operation and maintenance costs are kept to a reasonable level.)

- Special events are a valid and valued use at Black Canyon Reservoir (as noted in R-4). However, these events should be steered away from Black Canyon Park as much as possible during peak use periods, especially if they do not specifically need the facilities or location of this park.
- Redesigning, restoring, and/or advertising recreation opportunities at other parks could reduce the capacity and crowding issues at Black Canyon Park. Ideas in this regard are discussed under R-5 through R-9, below.

→ **R-2 Montour WMA—demand vs. capacity**: Demand vs. capacity is not currently a problem at the park/campground in Montour WMA. However, as suggested in discussion under N-9, above, both the levels and locations of recreational uses in the WMA as a whole should be monitored and managed to avoid unacceptable impacts on the vegetation and wildlife resources for which the WMA was established.

→ **R-3 Crowding, safety, user conflicts, and need for use zoning**: General concerns related to crowding and facility capacity are discussed in R-1 and R-2, above. Specific perspectives on user conflicts, and associated safety concerns, are noted below. The AHWG stresses that all conflict situations must be addressed in a fair and equitable manner:

- The primary conflict issue on the reservoir surface surrounds the increasing popularity of personal watercraft (PWC/“jet skis”). PWC users can disrupt fishing activities and cause safety concerns when they jump boat wakes or pass too close to other boaters. Also, in the upper reaches of the reservoir, adjacent landowners/residents have expressed concern about the noise of increasing PWC use.
- Conflicts stemming from crowded conditions can occur among users along the reservoir shoreline, focused especially on opportunities that are in short supply such as swimming and beaches. A specific example of this is the conflict and safety concerns that occur at the Black Canyon Park swimming area during peak times. The swimming area is very close to the boat launch and docks, and problems occur with swimmers going outside of the buoyed area, into waters where boats are operating. It may be necessary to better separate these uses.
- General, area-wide user group conflicts and safety concerns are emerging in the Montour WMA between: (1) hunting and general wildlife observation interests, and (2) different types of hunters (see R-29 through R-31 for additional discussion of this issue). Vehicle circulation and parking problems are a related concern. At present, hunters and other users simply park along the roads or at self-selected gathering points. No controls are in place to manage circulation or parking.

One solution would be to specifically designate parking areas for hunters and other user groups and restrict random, ad hoc parking.

- Also at Montour, there is definitely a potential for conflict between the intensity of use, as well as the locations of such uses as dog training, and wildlife management/protection objectives.

(Planning Team Note: At this time, it is not possible to judge whether the types or intensities of the above conflict situations/potentials clearly point to the need for additional use zoning as opposed to “softer” solutions such as better user education, improved signage, etc. However, as these concerns become better understood through RMP analysis, zoning or other area restrictions may need to be considered to reduce crowding, enhance safety, or address conflicts.)

Economic Benefits

→ **R-4 Role of reservoir & Montour in drawing visitors to Emmett & County (e.g., through special events such as pow wows:** Both Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA play an important role in the economy of Emmett and Gem County. This role should be reinforced and expanded as much as possible within resource constraints. Economic benefits accrue particularly from special events but also from general recreation opportunities such as boating and fishing. Perspectives and ideas identified to date include:

- Continuing, improving, and perhaps expanding special event promotion at both the reservoir and at Montour. Specific to Montour, examples include:
 - Spring migration festival for bird watchers
 - 3-D shoots (archery)
 - paint gun events
 - field trials (dog training)
 - Boy Scout events
 - black powder events

It should be noted that event selection, scheduling and promotion at Montour must be guided by wildlife needs, including seasonal restrictions. IDFG should play a central role in both defining the types of events most compatible with the resource focus of the WMA and planning the proper scale and timing of these events.

(see also R-23 through R-26 for notes on special event process and permitting).

- Protecting and expanding fishing opportunities.
- Developing interpretive programs oriented to the natural and cultural resources of the area, such as the history of the dam and related facilities, wildlife viewing at Montour, Tribal history and pre-history at Montour, and the old Montour town site.
- Participating in cooperative efforts with private enterprise, including the Thunder Mountain Line railroad (see A-9) and potential concession operations (see R-11).
- Working with the State Department of Commerce Tourism Division to explore potentials, and
- Other feasible opportunities from among those discussed under the Expansions or Improvements of Existing Facilities and New Facilities headings below.

Expansions or Improvements of Existing Facilities

→ R-5 Park expansion and improvement opportunities/needs:

(Planning Team Note: Originally, this issue statement was “Wild Rose Park expansion.” The statement has been broadened to become a central point from which to discuss or reference all park expansion opportunities identified by the AHWG. It should be noted that Reclamation has limited authority to expand or improve existing recreation facilities or construct new recreation facilities. For any recreation improvements beyond minimum and basic (improvements meeting health and safety, accessibility, and resource protection needs) a non-Federal public entity as a managing partner is required along with a 50% non-Federal cost share for all recreation development improvements and a 25% non-Federal cost share for all fish and wildlife enhancements.)

All facilities and programs are required to meet Federal accessibility standards. Reclamation has inventoried all recreation facilities in the RMP study area and is in the process of preparing action plans for correction of the deficiencies identified. Any expansions or improvements in recreation facilities would need to comply with current Federal accessibility standards.)

Opportunities for expansions and/or improvements to existing parks, as well as potential for new facilities discussed later herein, should be considered from a “global” perspective (i.e., in the context of reservoir and WMA resources and issues as a whole). The RMP should define what types of uses/facilities are appropriate to the settings and resources of each area and then plan expansions or improvements accordingly. Obviously, this approach must also attempt to match expansions or improvements with identified needs as closely as possible. The costs of development and operation and maintenance of expanded facilities compared to the benefits must also be part of the analysis. Relevant perspectives and observations on existing parks and facilities include the following:

- **Cobblestone Park:** This park is under-utilized and could be the focus of additional facility/activity development. Camping is one use suggested for this site, as well as development of areas and facilities to accommodate higher levels of day use (e.g., picnicking, group activities, etc.). However, better highway signage guiding people to this park and other means to promote this location would be needed. Because of its capacity for increased use, Cobblestone is one location that could help relieve the pressure currently focused on Black Canyon Park (at least for user groups that do not demand immediate reservoir access).

Another aspect of Cobblestone Park is its existing and potential role in the commercial recreational offerings of the Thunder Mountain Line railroad. The Thunder Mountain Line uses the railroad alignment that passes through the RMP study area, including the south shore area of the reservoir and the southern portion of Montour WMA. Cobblestone Park is currently a stopping and gathering point for the theme rides offered by the railroad. Further discussion of this commercial recreation interface with RMP lands and facilities is provided under A-9.
- **Wild Rose Park:** This park is popular and sometimes reaches capacity. It has also traditionally served as a rest stop along the highway. The park should be expanded, if feasible, to help meet demand. Improving access to the river for fishing is one particular opportunity that should be pursued.
- **Black Canyon Park:** Conditions at Black Canyon Park are a focus in the above discussion of demand vs. carrying capacity at the reservoir (see R-1). The RMP process should explore feasible opportunities to expand the capacity of this park. Both expanding the park into new areas and seeking ways to reconfigure the existing site to handle more use should be explored. In the latter regard, relocating the maintenance facility to another site is suggested as one option.
- **Triangle Park:** This park is underutilized, due (at least in part) to the fact that it does not have paved parking or electric power, and it is in an area of the reservoir that has been subject to high

levels of sedimentation (i.e., is beginning to experience limitations on the types of boats that can use the area). Nevertheless, the RMP should explore ways to attract more users to this location to help meet increasing demand. Paving the roads and parking areas at the park and providing better signage may help accomplish this objective.

- **Highway Boat Ramps:** There are three boat ramps along the highway, each with a small pullout area. These ramps are used by people when Black Canyon Park is full or closed and by people who either do not want to pay the fee at Black Canyon Park or simply want a less formal place to launch their boats. Some members of the public would like to see these ramps expanded (in terms of user capacity) to help meet demand for reservoir access; on the other hand, under current conditions, these ramps raise highway safety issues. A more complete discussion regarding the concerns, issues, and opportunities at these ramps is provided under R-20 through R-22, below.
- **Montour Campground:** Expansion and/or increased promotion of the campground and recreation opportunities at Montour as a whole may offer a way to help absorb some of the increasing demand for recreation in the overall study area. Perhaps this could be one part of the solution to reducing the pressure on Black Canyon Park and other locations around the reservoir. However, the Montour WMA faces its own challenges from increasing use (e.g., hunting, bird watching, dog trials). Care must be taken to avoid creating additional problems at Montour when attempting to solve problems at the reservoir.

From a facility perspective, opinions vary regarding future treatment of the campground at Montour:

- Some members of the public suggest that the campground should be upgraded to meet current RV standards, and that it should be expanded to increase capacity. At present, the campground cannot accommodate large RVs; and the facility can be crowded during peak periods.
- Another perspective is that an emphasis on accommodating large RVs and expanding highly developed campground capacity is not consistent with the intent or character of the WMA. The WMA was established to protect and feature wildlife habitat. Recreational facilities provided within the WMA should be low intensity, with minimal impact on the land and resources. Developed RV campgrounds may better be provided on lands outside of the WMA (e.g., through private enterprise in surrounding areas, such as the KOA facility that was once proposed near Squaw Creek and the highway).

→ **R-6 RV facility improvements at Montour campground:** (see R-5).

→ **R-7 Restroom improvements:** The only site/area noted by the AHWG where restroom improvements are needed is the Montour campground. Agency managers suggest that restroom improvements/replacements may also be needed at Black Canyon and Triangle Parks.

→ **R-8 Year-round opportunities (keep restrooms closed due to vandalism):** The restrooms at Wild Rose Park are kept open year-round, primarily because of the park's role as a rest stop for highway travelers. This is done despite problems with vandalism. No other facilities at the reservoir or Montour are currently kept open outside of the recreation season. One significant potential for winter use in the RMP study area is bird watching at Montour. IDFG confirms that this use could be acceptable at low intensity. If this or any other winter use is to be allowed or promoted through the RMP, restroom facilities would need to be provided.

→ **R-9 Others:** (All relevant perspectives and ideas identified by the AHWG related to facility expansion or improvement needs are included in prior discussions.)

New Facilities

- **R-10 Marina at Black Canyon Park:** Because of its popularity and its central role in providing access to the reservoir, Black Canyon Park could be a very desirable location for a marina. However, there are important concerns and uncertainties that must be addressed if such a facility is proposed:
- There is probably not sufficient room at the park to accommodate a marina and associated parking. Certainly, no new facilities should be added that decrease the “park” areas or increase the crowding problems already occurring. If a marina is deemed desirable and otherwise feasible, finding a separate location may be the best approach to both adding user access capacity and relieving the crowding at Black Canyon Park.
 - The carrying capacity of the reservoir surface must be considered in any proposal to expand boating access (see R-1).
 - Public safety and potential water quality impacts must be considered if fuel sales are included in a marina proposal.
 - It is uncertain whether such a facility is economically feasible, either as a public agency venture or through a concession agreement.
 - Reclamation does not have authority to expend funds for this facility absent a public agency serving as the managing partner.
- **R-11 Concessions:** Concessions may be a way to provide additional services at one or more of the parks in the study area. Suggestions for potential concessions include food service, non-motorized watercraft (e.g., rafts), and a marina (see R-10). Economic viability and impact on area- or site-specific carrying capacity would be among the issues to be addressed in considering concession proposals.
- (Planning Team Note: Reclamation issues concession licenses for its recreation facilities under certain circumstances. As/if needed, detail regarding the formal process and specific requirements can be provided.)
- **R-12 Group sites at the reservoir or Montour:** Demand is increasing for group sites at both the reservoir and Montour. Currently day group use occurs at Black Canyon, Wild Rose, Cobblestone, and Triangle Parks. There are 2 group shelters at Black Canyon Park and 1 group shelter at Wild Rose Park. Group camping has been occurring informally at the Montour campground. Potentials to meet increasing demand should be explored for each of the recreation sites in the RMP study area. However, some sites/areas may not be able to support or be appropriate for expanded group facilities. For example, in the case of Black Canyon Park, the crowding/capacity issues discussed above would be central in determining the feasibility or desirability of adding group sites. At Montour, there is some question on whether adding facilities for or encouraging group camping would be compatible with the wildlife focus of the WMA.
- **R-13 Camping at the reservoir (especially at Cobblestone Park):** Considerable interest has been expressed in overnight camping at the reservoir. The primary opportunities noted to date for new campgrounds are Cobblestone and Triangle parks. Although not actually on the reservoir, but located just below the dam, Cobblestone Park may offer the opportunity for both vehicle/RV and tent camping; Triangle may be more appropriate for tent-only accommodations due to its smaller size. Black Canyon Park has also been discussed as a possibility for overnight use; however, the day use capacity problems now being experienced at this park may argue against this option.

(Planning Team Note: The area most often suggested for camping at Cobblestone Park is adjacent to the river. This area is in the floodplain and is covered with water during some spring flood events. Also, some of the lands in this area are not Reclamation lands. These issues would need to be taken into consideration prior to designating camping here.)

Dispersed camping is becoming a concern in the RMP area. Areas most often used at present include Squaw Creek and highway boat ramp #3. None of these areas are currently posted as no camping zones. The RMP should consider and decide whether camping is allowed in any of these dispersed areas. Where camping is not allowed, signage and enforcement will be needed to manage/control unauthorized use.

(Planning Team Note: Reclamation policy dictates a 14 day maximum stay at camp sites. This applies to developed camp sites such as at Montour Campground and at any dispersed camp sites where camping is occurring.)

- **R-14 Frisbee golf**: Disc (“Frisbee”) golf has been suggested as a desirable activity in the RMP study area. The popularity of this activity is increasing. Cobblestone and Wild Rose Parks have been noted as potential sites for this use. The RMP should review potential areas for this use in context with the demand and available sites for other uses/activities.
- **R-15 Hiking trails (e.g., for wildlife viewing)**: The public considers hiking and biking trails highly desirable. At the reservoir, suggestions range from large-scale to site-specific. At a large scale, a multi-use trail completely around the reservoir is cited as the ideal, with other concepts including a trail linking the parks along the north shore, and/or a trail on the south side of the reservoir, away from the highway, perhaps linking with Montour. More locally, providing better trail access to fishing spots at Cobblestone Park has been requested. It is uncertain whether the land base around the reservoir would allow the larger concepts to be pursued (i.e., topography and ownership patterns may make these trails infeasible and cost may be prohibitive; on the other hand, cooperative relationships with the railroad and working with grazing or agricultural leaseholders could help overcome constraints on a south-side trail). Opportunities at a more site-specific scale, such as that suggested at Cobblestone Park, may be more readily achieved. In any case, the RMP should explore feasible opportunities around the reservoir to provide hiking and biking trails at either or both these scales. The potential for trail linkages between the reservoir and surrounding BLM lands should also be investigated.

At Montour, significant opportunities may exist for hiking (and perhaps biking) trail development, particularly as a way of both accommodating and managing wildlife-oriented user groups (i.e., hunters, bird watchers, etc.). Trails could provide better access for users and, at the same time, concentrate use away from sensitive areas. AHWG suggestions for Montour include educational/nature trails and accessible hunting trails. In any case, as noted for the reservoir, the RMP should explore opportunities for trail development at Montour WMA and the potential for linkages with surrounding areas.

(Planning Team Note: Any trails developed would require a non-Federal managing partner and 50/50 cost share; and would need to meet Federal accessibility standards).

- **R-16 Equestrian trails or trailheads**: Around the reservoir, there is probably not sufficient land base to support equestrian trails, trailheads, or staging areas. Constraints on trail development around the reservoir are noted above. Trailheads/staging areas require relatively large areas for trailer circulation and parking, and any such areas available at the reservoir would most likely first be considered to help meet demand for reservoir-oriented/reservoir-dependent activities.

At Montour, AHWG members note that Reclamation had plans a number of years ago for equestrian trails, corrals, etc. These plans have not been implemented due to cost share requirements not being met and an analysis of impacts not having been done previously. For the current RMP, equestrian use and associated support facilities could be viewed as desirable from a general public recreation standpoint, and the WMA does offer good potential for this use. However, the potential for conflicts between this use and the wildlife focus of the WMA would need to be considered. Further, as noted in earlier discussions, the WMA is now experiencing capacity problems and conflict issues with current user groups (i.e., hunters, wildlife enthusiasts, dog training, etc.); introduction of equestrian uses may not be appropriate given these challenges. Accommodation of an equestrian trail requires a large parking area and horses introduce more weed seeds to an area.

- **R-17 Recreation (e.g., trail) connections between Emmett & reservoir:** The RMP should include an objective to work with Emmett, the County, IDOT, and the Irrigation Districts, as needed, to seek feasible recreation connections between the community and the reservoir. Ideas include: (1) a greenbelt/trail from Cobblestone Park to Emmett, using the canal, the Washington Street Bridge, and/or the highway as parts of the route; (2) a park and ride/walk location at Freeze Out Hill, with a trail along the canal to the dam; and (3) river boating/floating activities originating at or below the dam (e.g., before the dam was built, there were canoe races from Horseshoe Bend to Emmett). Opportunities to use the canals would require the cooperation of the Irrigation Districts, and concerns about liability would need to be addressed. Opportunities to use the highway as part of any trail connection may require widening of the shoulder; in any case, the Idaho Department of Transportation (IDOT) would need to be involved.

(Planning Team Note: It should be noted that the majority of the areas being discussed as possibilities to link the reservoir and Emmett are outside of the RMP study area and not on Reclamation administered lands. While the RMP can include recommendations to cooperate with and encourage other entities to pursue these activities, the areas suggested for trails that are not on Reclamation lands are outside the scope of the RMP.)

- **R-18 Others:** The RMP should investigate the feasibility of boat-in, walk-in or bike-in picnic sites along the south shore of the reservoir. Obviously, walk-in or bike-in sites would only be feasible if trail access can be provided. Nevertheless, providing day use opportunities on the south shore could be part of the answer to capacity problems at Black Canyon Park.

Reservoir Sedimentation

- **R-19 Impacts to various water uses; responses to maximize boating capacity:** See R-1.

Boat Ramps Along the Highway

(Planning Team Note: As indicated in prior discussions, there are three boat ramps along the highway on the north shore of the reservoir. One of these is west of Black Canyon Park (designated as ramp #1) and two are to the east (designated as ramps #2 and #3). Ramp #2 is just west of Triangle Park, and ramp #3 is approximately one mile east of that park. Each of these ramps is accessed and used via a small turnout area along the highway, and each of them features a small dock for loading and unloading boats.

Ramp #1 is the most heavily used by boaters, especially when Black Canyon Park is either closed or full. This ramp is also used by boaters who do not wish to pay the fee at Black Canyon Park or who simply want a less formal place to stage their boating activities. The other ramps are less busy but are popular with PWC users).

→ **R-20 Responsibility, liability, safety, traffic impacts:** This issue statement identifies two administrative/management concerns associated with these ramps: (1) confirming which agency (e.g., Reclamation or Gem County) is responsible for operating and maintaining these ramps (and thus which agency is liable for accidents that might occur at the ramps); and (2) addressing the safety hazards and traffic circulation that can occur when the ramps (especially ramp #1) are busy. These are discussed separately below.

- (Planning Team Note: It has been confirmed that Reclamation and Gem County signed a Cooperative Agreement on March 29, 1990, the purpose of which is to “promote improved maintenance and management of public recreational facilities on Black Canyon Reservoir in the Black Canyon Recreation Area; public recreational facilities being defined as including docking, launching, swimming, fishing camping, picnicking, or general purpose boating facilities [except] those used by Waterways or Reclamation for specific operational functions.” The roadside ramp facilities are frequently referred to as the “County Ramps.” Signs posted at the ramps bear the logos of both agencies. The Gem County Sheriff has correctly operated on the assumption that Reclamation is the responsible agency for maintaining these ramps. Reclamation has correctly operated on the assumption that Gem County is responsible for law enforcement, as well as assistance in placing docks at these and other locations throughout the reservoir.)

The RMP process should provide clarity on this topic, especially given: (a) existing concerns associated with highway safety at/near the ramps (as discussed below); (b) ongoing needs for ramp and dock repair and ongoing maintenance; and (c) suggestions for expansion and/or improvements at the dock locations (see R-21/R-22).

- Use of these ramps can cause both highway safety and general traffic circulation problems. As noted above, the ramps are served only by small, unmarked turnouts along the highway. When these sites are busy, the turnouts fill rapidly with parked vehicles and trailers, and users begin to park along the highway after launching their boats. This occurs predominantly at ramp #1 because it is a focus for overflow when Black Canyon Park is full, but drop-off and parking safety can also be a concern at ramp #2.

Potential solutions to these concerns include: (a) installing “No Parking” signs along the highway near the ramps (per the IDOT process and requirements described in A-4); (b) paving and striping the turn-outs to clearly demarcate parking spots/capacity and launch lane(s); and (c) providing more boat launching and parking capacity at Black Canyon Park. The first two of these approaches would require close coordination with and perhaps assistance from IDOT.

Perspectives on the potential to add parking/access capacity at Black Canyon Park are provided under A-2/A-3, below.

→ **R-21 Only access to reservoir when parks are closed; and R-22 Potential to expand for more boat access & other uses:** Despite the traffic and safety concerns that can occur at the highway ramps, there is considerable interest in at least keeping them in operation and in maintaining/improving existing facilities. Some members of the public would also like to see these sites expanded if possible, both in size and in facilities offered, and would like to see additional sites developed if feasible. Suggested improvements to existing sites include: (1) extending ramp #1 another 50-60 feet; (2) repairing ramps #1 and #2; (3) providing more organization and efficiency in vehicle/trailer circulation and drop-off conditions; (4) providing more and/or longer docks; (5) re-orienting some of the docks to reduce hazards associated with the boaters being blinded by the sun as they approach (the County has already begun moving some docks to improve this condition); (6) providing picnic tables and trash receptacles; and (7) more strictly enforcing speed limits near the ramps, especially ramp #3.

Potentials for new ramp locations include the area between the existing ramp #1 and Black Canyon Park.

Special Events

- **R-23** Clear policy; **R-24** Interaction with/impact on general public use; **R-25** Cumbersome permit process; **R-26** Fair fee structure: The value and importance of special events at both the reservoir and Montour have been noted in earlier discussions (see R-1 and R-4). As indicated in issue statements R-23, R-25 and R-26, some members of the public believe that Reclamation's policy, permit process, and fee structure for special events should be reviewed and revised. The RMP process is the opportunity to conduct this review and to: (1) clearly articulate special event policy; (2) streamline the permit process as much as possible; and (3) ensure a fair and consistent fee structure.

(Planning Team Note: The RMP will articulate policy on the types of special events allowed in the study area and the restrictions that may be placed on such events. It will also clearly describe the permit process, agency contact points, and criteria for setting fees. In the latter regard, however, the RMP can only seek to provide clarity on process, requirements, and fees; it cannot materially change these parameters.

Issue R-24 refers to the impact that special events can have on the general user public, especially if the events are conducted at locations and/or times when general public demand for access is high. Dedication of all or part of any recreation site, especially Black Canyon Park, to a special event can create conflicts with the general public. Clearly, special events should be scheduled for either (or both) times and locations where such conflicts can be avoided or minimized.

- **R-27** Future status of pow wow site at Montour:

(Planning Team Note: For the past several years, Reclamation has permitted a site at Montour WMA to be used for the Western Idaho Pow Wow Association, a private commercial event oriented to Tribal culture, history, and activities. The permit was terminated for non-payment and non-compliance with the terms and conditions. The former pow wow site may be an appropriate location for some other special event activity or for general recreation use, dependent on the findings of RMP review and alternatives analysis. However, it should be noted this area is very wet with high groundwater, dependant on the time of year).

ORV Use

- **R-28** Reclamation lands closed (impacts ease of hunting at Montour): All Reclamation lands, agency-wide, are formally closed to ORV use unless specifically opened as per 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 420. At Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA, all lands are closed. Some members of the public suggest that this closure unfairly and unnecessarily constrains hunting access at Montour (i.e., particularly for those less able to walk long distances). On the other hand, several AHWG members stress that the ORV closure must remain in effect to protect the resources for which the WMA was established. Instead, rather than any consideration of opening additional areas to vehicular access at Montour, existing levels of access should be managed and controlled.

(Planning Team Note: Given Reclamation's current policy and its responsibility to protect and properly manage the resources at Montour, it is highly unlikely that any exceptions to the ORV closure will be considered in this RMP.)

Hunting & Shooting

→ **R-29** Use conflicts, safety issues; **R-30** Farmers at Montour getting shot at; and **R-31** Conflicts between different types of hunting (e.g., waterfowl vs. upland game): Discussion of these issues focused primarily on the conflicts and safety concerns that can stem from hunting activities at Montour WMA. These conflicts and concerns arise due to: (1) high and increasing demand for wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities in general (both consumptive and non-consumptive), (2) inherent differences in the needs and activities of different user groups (e.g., upland game bird vs. waterfowl hunters, and hunters vs. bird watchers), and (3) absence of any management or control of access (i.e. users can park anywhere in the WMA and enter any portion of the area from any direction. The RMP should address the need for better management to reduce, control, or resolve these conflicts. Preliminary suggestions in this regard include:

- better public education/information (e.g., signage, web site notices, etc) regarding hunting seasons, nesting season closures, special event scheduling, and other use management topics;
- emphasizing hunter education and etiquette;
- increased enforcement of hunting restrictions and regulations, seasonal closures, etc.;
- improving our understanding of the problem through better reporting and monitoring of conflict situations (type, location, frequency, etc.); and
- increasing management of access and parking, including such actions as:
 - providing specific parking areas for hunters and other users,
 - reducing or eliminating parking along the roadways, and/or
 - establishing walking-only areas in some locations

Beyond these items, random shooting, including the shooting of “No Shooting” signs, does occur in the study area as a whole. This is a statewide issue and little can be done to control it short of deliberate, site- or area-specific enforcement presence.

Potential for Interpretive Programs/Facilities

→ **R-32** Potential for interpretive programs/facilities focused on natural & cultural resources at Montour, the dam, and associated facilities, etc.: Considerable opportunities exist in the RMP study area for interpretive/educational facilities and activities. These include the wildlife, vegetation, and cultural resources at Montour, as well as the dam and associated facilities at the reservoir. The RMP should include a prioritized program for developing these opportunities. (See N-1, N-22 through N-24, and R-4 for additional perspective.)

Maintenance and Clean-Up Issues

→ **R-33** Maintenance & clean-up: Particular locations cited by the AHWG where more attention is needed for maintenance & clean-up include: Highway boat ramps #2 and #3 (i.e., those east of Black Canyon Park) and the power line site. Adding trashcans at the boat ramp sites may improve the litter/clean-up situation; however, this would increase agency operation and maintenance (O&M) costs and can become a problem in its own right, with people using the receptacles and sites as dumps for household refuse. Agency managers also indicate that clean-up is needed at Montour (e.g., abandoned vehicles, dumping, etc.). Each of these areas will need to be evaluated on a site-by-site basis, in coordination with other agencies, to determine the best way to deal with this issue.

Access and Other Land Uses

Roads and Parking

- **A-1 Access road adequacy & management** (e.g., Black Canyon Park, Triangle Park, Cobblestone Park): The only identified access road concerns within the RMP study area are:
- Circulation and safety issues caused by recreationists parking along the State Highway—associated with: (1) full/crowded conditions at Black Canyon Park; and (2) high levels of use at the boat ramps along the highway. The potential for providing additional parking capacity at Black Canyon Park to help alleviate these concerns is discussed under A-2/A-3, below. Potential methods of more directly controlling parking along the highway in either of these situations are noted under the R-20 discussion of highway boat ramp issues.
 - Road alignment at the entry to Triangle Park—the park entry is located at a blind curve in the highway such that concern for sight-lines and accident potential is heightened, especially for park users arriving from the east or departing to the west. IDOT, however, indicates that there has been no history of accidents at this location; the Sheriff's office confirms that there have been few, if any, problems there. "Boats Entering Highway" signs have been posted to warn motorists approaching the park that slow-moving vehicles may be entering the highway. Beyond maintaining these warning signs, IDOT has no plans for improvement of the highway at this location.
 - The need for and/or desirability of better signage directing the public to Cobblestone Park—e.g., more signage is needed on Plaza Road and along the State Highway. The RMP process should include a review of signage needs overall, including an assessment of this question.
- **A-2 Parking adequacy at recreation sites; and A-3 Parking along highway** (Black Canyon Park, boat ramps): The parking capacity problems associated with Black Canyon Park and the highway boat ramps have been described in prior discussions. Parking capacity at current use levels is adequate at Cobblestone, Wild Rose, and Triangle parks, as well as Montour. The parking lots at Wild Rose Park can fill on occasion, but this is not seen as a significant problem at present.
- At Black Canyon Park, in association with potential measures to control parking along the highway (see R-20), the RMP should look at possibilities for expanding parking capacity. Options such as moving the maintenance facility to another location, redesigning existing parking areas, and developing additional parking north of the highway should be explored. However, any of these potential solutions may involve additional concerns that would limit their feasibility or desirability. For example, any provision of additional parking could simply exacerbate the problem of user crowding at the park (i.e., current parking capacity may mirror user capacity of the parklands and shoreline). Also, pedestrian safety would be a concern with any parking provided across the highway from the park. In any case, a realistic approach to addressing increasing demand at Black Canyon Park must be reflected in the RMP, whether that approach is to provide additional access and parking, provide facilities at other locations to take pressure off of this park, or simply accept that the park can and will reach capacity during peak periods and must be operated on a first-come, first-served basis, with closure to additional users (e.g., "park full" signage) when capacity is reached.
- **A-4 IDOT role in access management:** Any solution to problems associated with the State Highway will require the cooperation and assistance of IDOT. For example, installation of "No Parking" signs, roadway striping, or other measures to control parking along the highway will require the following:
- a request from law enforcement;

- an IDOT study to document the problem;
- consideration and approval of solutions by the IDOT Board;
- demonstration of enforcement capability, including towing and associated information signage; and
- installation of the signage, striping, etc.

Clearly, this process involves a 3-way cooperative effort among IDOT, the Gem County Sheriff, and Reclamation.

- **A-5 Access across railroad grade through Reclamation land:** Safety and access concerns can be associated with the public walking down the railroad corridor and with roadway crossings of the railroad right-of-way. The railroad has a no-trespassing restriction extending 12-14 feet on either side of the tracks, and the railroad company indicates that this restriction is non-negotiable. Better public education, additional signage, and more active enforcement of this restriction may be needed as use levels increase on Reclamation lands. Also, this restriction would limit the feasibility of trail connections along the south shore of the reservoir (see R-15). The only roadway crossings of the railroad grade are at Montour; no significant issues have been identified at these crossings.
- **A-6 Accessibility/ADA needs:** Reclamation has an ongoing program to upgrade facilities to meet accessibility standards and has already made a number of related improvements to facilities in the study area (e.g., Black Canyon and Wild Rose parks). Also, any new facilities, including those built by others on Reclamation lands such as future site used by the railroad, must meet accessibility requirements. The RMP should review and reflect needs for accessibility improvements.

Other Land Uses

- **A-7 Grazing & agriculture leases at Montour (support for continuation):** Members of the AHWG expressed clear support for continuing a grazing and agricultural leasing program at Montour WMA and on lands currently leased around the reservoir. However, grazing can and should be used as a management tool. Grazing leases should be structured to achieve habitat management goals, with annual review to determine if these goals are being achieved.

(Planning Team Note: Only through intensive (and often cost-prohibitive) management techniques is grazing as a wildlife habitat management tool (to control weeds) somewhat justified. Grazing to control weeds is only effective on some weedy species and only in the year it is used; even then weeds are generally the last plants eaten. It must be done in very short durations and on a continuing (every year) basis to be in any way effective. If stopped for just one year weeds kept at bay through grazing will take off with vigor.)

- **A-8 Dog training at Montour WMA (conditions are excellent for this use; public interest expressed):** Dog training/trials are a very popular activity at Montour. Two organized groups conduct training/trials twice a year for this purpose; many individual dog owners also use the area. There is a high degree of support for continuing this activity. Careful management and coordination with IDFG will be necessary to ensure continuing compatibility with the fundamental wildlife and vegetation management objectives for which the WMA was created (see N-9).
- **A-9 Future of railroad grade--railroad plans to retain, explore recreational passenger venture:** At the outset of the RMP effort, there was uncertainty regarding the railroad company's plans for the tracks and corridor through the study area. Reports had circulated that the railroad was preparing to abandon the tracks. In such a case, the railroad corridor could offer significant opportunity for public

trails. Railroad representatives at the RMP public meeting and on the AHWG confirm that the tracks and corridor will be retained and remain active. The primary use of the corridor at present is for the recreational/commercial offerings of the Thunder Mountain Line. Current offerings, which use the corridor through the RMP study area, include: Dinner Train, Murder Mystery Train, Black Canyon BBQ, and Wild West Shoot-Out. The operators of the Thunder Mountain Line are interested in cooperative efforts with Reclamation, including establishing/developing a stop and BBQ area at Montour (the preferred site was indicated on a study area map at the AHWG meeting), integrating wildlife and bird watching at Montour into some of the Line's offerings, and possible use of Cobblestone Park. Other ideas for new theme rides, such as an astronomy trip suggested by the Discovery Center, could also use stopping and/or staging points in the RMP study area. Given the community's emphasis on reinforcing the role that Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour play in the local economy, the RMP should explore these opportunities for public/private cooperative programs. In addition to the economic benefits that could accompany such cooperative efforts, railroad programs in the RMP area can incorporate and advance public education regarding proper use and stewardship of the resources at Montour and elsewhere. This is another example of the synergy that could accompany cooperation between Reclamation, the County, and the railroad.

Finally, even though the railroad is expected to remain active, as described above, AHWG members suggest that it may be desirable for the RMP to reflect the option of trail use if the railroad grade is ever abandoned in the future. Such an opportunity for public trails should not be lost if the railroad company's plans change.

Boundary Definition & Relationship with Surrounding Uses

- **A-10** Encroachment & trespass on Reclamation lands; **A-11** Impacts on adjacent private lands: Few, if any, significant problems appear to exist in terms of encroachment or trespass on Reclamation land or with users on Reclamation land or water trespassing on adjacent private properties. At the Montour campground, there historically were problems with users trespassing on surrounding lands, but the addition of a park host has minimized this concern. The only other concern noted in AHWG discussion is in the Hunters Cove area, where lands along the shore are in private ownership, with Reclamation holding a flowage easement. In this area, PWC use has been reported as a problem for adjacent owners, with noise cited as an annoyance and wakes causing erosion on private properties. The County has designated this area of the reservoir surface as a no-wake zone and marked the restricted area with buoys. Increased enforcement of this restriction may be necessary if conflicts continue.
- **A-12** Relationship with adjacent uses (BLM, Gem County Planning & Zoning)—(including effects on RMP area of surrounding subdivision activity): The RMP effort must remain aware of and seek compatibility with County and other agency plans/programs on lands surrounding the study area. The AHWG identified Deborah Lish, the County Planning and Zoning Administrator, as a primary contact regarding surrounding land use plans and interface with Reclamation lands.

Management and Implementation

Security at Dam Facilities

- **M-1** Increased concern for security at the dam and related facilities:

(Planning Team Note: No discussion of this issue occurred at the AHWG meeting. However, it is important to note that concern for safety and security at all Reclamation dams and facilities has increased markedly since the events of September 11, 2001. Reclamation is in the process of studying and defining needed safety and security enhancements for its facilities, including Black Canyon Dam. As decisions are made in this regard, if these decisions would affect RMP options or alternatives, they will be incorporated into the RMP process).

Public Information

- **M-2** RMP brochure/map--facilities, activities, wildlife, history; **M-3** Signage (general information, safety, use regulations, points of interest) and **M-4** Kiosks: The RMP should include a map illustrating the location of and activities offered at recreation sites, other recreation/use areas, access roads and trails, wildlife management areas, areas of cultural interest, etc. Public information materials should also clearly describe use restrictions and regulations.

Needs and desires for additional signage include (many of which are noted in prior discussions):

- better signage to promote and guide users to Cobblestone Park;
- interpretive signage at Montour, focused on wildlife and vegetation, historical resources, and Tribal history;
- interpretive signage at the dam and associated facilities;
- access control signage (for both vehicular and pedestrian uses) at Montour as one method of both managing diverse user groups and protecting resources, especially at sensitive times;
- Additional “No Parking” signs along the highway to control circulation and safety problems associated with overflow from Black Canyon Park and the highway boat ramps;
- updated boating regulation signs (i.e., those that specify boating direction, boat/watercraft speed limits, boating/watercraft etiquette, etc.);
- “No Trespassing” signs at key locations along the railroad right-of-way;
- “No Camping” signs where unauthorized camping has been a problem (e.g., Squaw Creek); and
- signage to help implement the closure of Reclamation lands to ORV use.

Kiosks are another medium by which to provide interpretive information and guides to the resources, recreational opportunities, and/or regulations in the study area. Kiosks may be appropriate at locations such as the dam and Montour WMA. The City of Emmett has indicated that it has a kiosk it is willing to contribute for use at the reservoir or Montour as part of the public information program. Audubon volunteers may be available for help in implementing a sign program.

Law Enforcement

- **M-5** Vandalism & litter; **M-6** Shooting; **M-7** Unauthorized camping and ORV use; and **M-8** Encroachments & trespass: The Gem County Sheriff provides basic law enforcement services in the RMP study area. IDFG can provide enforcement of hunting regulations in the RMP study area. As the RMP is developed, any needs for changes in or additions to current law enforcement attention would need to be arranged through/with the Sheriff. Changes in law enforcement in support of RMP implementation can range from simply increasing coordination on enforcement priorities (i.e., within current levels of enforcement personnel and equipment) to adding additional enforcement capacity, through Reclamation funding or other means.

Regarding the specific concerns noted in issue statements M-5 through M-8, the following observations are made regarding law enforcement needs:

- Vandalism and litter have historically been problems at the developed recreation sites, including the highway boat ramps. Providing park hosts at Montour, Black Canyon Park, and Cobblestone Park has substantially reduced both of these problems. Currently, the restrooms at Wild Rose Park seem to be getting inordinate attention from vandals; perhaps a park host would help there also. Providing trash receptacles at the highway boat ramps may help with the litter problem at these locations but would increase O&M costs.
- Concerns associated with hunting and shooting are discussed under R-29 through R-31. Management and enforcement can more readily be achieved for hunting activities than for random shooting.
- Sheriff patrols have helped in recent years to improve the situation related to unauthorized camping and ORV use. As noted in R-13, areas that may require additional attention, dependent upon RMP findings, include: (1) Squaw Creek, where camping outside of Reclamation lands sometimes spills onto Reclamation land; and (2) ramp #3, where PWC users now like to camp.

Maintenance and Management Responsibilities

- **M-9** Montour WMA: (See N-11 through N-13.)
- **M-10** IDFG relationship: (See N-11 through N-13.)
- **M-11** Recreation sites/facilities (County interest): Reclamation operates and maintains the recreation sites within the RMP study area. In past years, Reclamation has discussed with Gem County the potential for the County to take over park management. While the County is interested in this potential, it has not had (and at present still does not have) the financial resources necessary to accomplish an effective transition. As/if fiscal conditions improve, the County would be open to future discussion of this potential.
- **M-12** Boat ramps & docks along the highway: (See R-20.)
- **M-13** Roadways (IDOT, County, Reclamation): The access road system leading to and within the RMP study area involves a cooperative effort among IDOT, Gem County, and Reclamation. IDOT controls the State Highway through the area; the County is responsible for other public roads; and Reclamation is responsible for roads within the recreation sites and at the dam and associated facilities. These agencies cooperate on a regular basis to resolve issues and make improvements. For example, the County and IDOT have cooperated in placing boulder barriers to control ORV use. As roadway issues are identified in the RMP process (e.g., the highway safety issues discussed in R-1 and R-20), appropriate cooperative responses must be defined to address them.

Implementation Priorities and Funding

- **M-14** Clear priorities; and **M-15** Funding relationships (e.g., matching partner needs):

(Planning Team Note: For the RMP to be an effective management tool, it must clearly state implementation priorities; these priorities must be supported with adequate funding and staff resources. Ongoing programs such as weed control, wildlife management and enhancement, and recreation facility operation and maintenance must all be funded and staffed at adequate levels. The same will be true if ongoing programs are modified or expanded or if new initiatives (such as an

Integrated Pest Management Plan or additional public information programs) are proposed as part of the RMP process. Implementation of new projects and/or programs will likely require cooperative efforts with other agencies. For example, current regulations require Reclamation to have a non-Federal, public entity, cost-share partner in all new fish and wildlife enhancement or recreation facility development projects. In the case of fish and wildlife projects, the cost-share proportion is 75% Reclamation and 25% cost-share partner; for recreation projects, the proportion is 50/50. The cost-share partner must also be a non-Federal public entity responsible for management of the area under contract with Reclamation. Cooperative efforts with volunteers can also be a way to achieve results; IDFG already partners with volunteers to implement management projects at Montour. Overall, as the RMP process unfolds and RMP alternatives are defined, creative ways must concurrently be explored to pool agency resources, achieve cost-share requirements, partner with volunteer organizations, or otherwise build effective implementation relationships).

